

5th Avenue NE Streetscape Plan
Northgate Stakeholders Group

Final Report

December 1, 2004

November 1, 2004 Meeting

SDOT Response February 24, 2005

This report was initially developed by a subcommittee of the Northgate Stakeholders Group after meeting with Sandra Woods of Seattle's Department of Transportation. Subcommittee members included Brad Mason, Barbara Maxwell, and Michelle Rupp. The subcommittee report was reviewed at the November 18 Stakeholders Group meeting where it received unanimous support. Following the meeting, Barbara Maxwell made a correction to page 2 of the report, as follows: the location of the curb radius was the 5th Avenue/"Civic Center" driveway, not the 5th Avenue/Mall driveway. She also added a bullet to page 3 concerning mast arms that had been inadvertently omitted.

These changes were sent by email to all members of the Stakeholders Group for review and concurrence. As of December 1, a majority (15 seats) of Group members had sent email messages expressing their approval of the proposed changes. No one opposed them.

Two members sent comments that should be noted. One representative commented on the use of pedestrian-initiated traffic signals as effective means to improve efficiency for traffic as well as pedestrians. Another member sent the following comment on the use of mast arms on 5th Ave. NE: "Keep in mind that this is a retail street and while retailers like to accommodate pedestrians where economically feasible, anything that blocks the view of the property from the street (such as bushy trees or possibly mast arms...) is a retail killer."

The remainder of the report is as it was presented to the Stakeholders Group on Nov. 18.

Background & Context: The sub-committee reviewed the *5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan Final Report (April 2002)* and its *Executive Summary* insert. (Some sub-committee members had participated in the planning of this design.)

The sub-committee also considered the *Northgate Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Draft Plan (September 16, 2004)*. In particular, the committee considered the Seattle Planning Commission's framework recommendations necessary to really change Northgate from an auto-oriented to a pedestrian-oriented community. The basic recommendation of the Planning Commission is that Seattle Department of Transportation must make pedestrians as high a priority as vehicles as a clear foundation for elevating the pedestrian mode as an important means of mobility at Northgate. (Some sub-committee members had also participated on the Northgate Stakeholders Pedestrian/Open Space Subcommittee).

Materials Reviewed: 90% Review Plan for the Northgate TSM/5th Avenue NE Improvements, Phase 1, Sheets 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 16. (***NOTE: This was the first opportunity for citizens to review and comment on the specific design details for the 5th Avenue NE project.**)

Specific Comments & Recommendations on the Plan Materials Reviewed:

Sheet 8: West side of 5th Avenue NE at the northern edge of the project. Relocate the power pole south of the existing bus stop so that it does not obstruct the pedestrian pathway.

SDOT Response: Pole will be relocated out of pedestrian pathway.

Sheet 9:

- Pedestrian Crosswalk: The sub-committee was alarmed and strongly objects to the elimination of the north leg of the east-west pedestrian crossing at 5th Avenue NE and the Mall driveway. Elimination of this leg of the crosswalk is inconsistent with the designation of 5th Avenue NE as a major pedestrian street and the Seattle Planning Commission's framework recommendations with respect to the pedestrian mode and the following:
 - A full pedestrian crossing at this location appears in the 2002 5th Avenue Streetscape Design Plan Final Report. The Executive Summary from this report was presented to the stakeholder group.
 - A full pedestrian crossing at this location appears in the 2004 Northgate Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Draft Plan. This plan was approved by the stakeholder group at their September 23, 2004 meeting.
 - A full pedestrian crossing at this location appears in the May 24, 2004 95% Construction Documents for the Northgate Library, Community Center & Park.
 - A full pedestrian crossing at this location appears in the proposed plan for the Mall's 5th Avenue NE driveway included in the Northgate Development Agreement (December 8, 2003) & in the "Pedestrian Link #2" shown in Simon's Illustrative Site Plan presented to the stakeholder group. This crosswalk has been touted as a (or perhaps THE) major east-west connection to the Northgate "Civic Center" on the east side of 5th Avenue. This intersection presents an opportunity to really do something unique and strongly pedestrian-oriented at Northgate and begin to change Northgate from auto-oriented to pedestrian-oriented. It could, and probably will, set the tone for the future for pedestrian improvements in the Northgate Overlay.
 - Pedestrians will arrive at this crossing location from the north as well as from the south and east. There are also important pedestrian traffic generators from the senior housing areas to the northeast, the post office and business areas north of the "civic center" and east of 5th Avenue that may wish to use this crosswalk.
 - Contrary to the goal of elevating the pedestrian mode, it is the vehicles exiting the Mall driveway via the single left-turn lane that will be given priority over

the pedestrian. This will give the drivers a message that pedestrians are secondary and that drivers do not have to watch for and yield to them.

- It is not clear that the capacity and signal timing for the 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way intersection will allow northbound exiting traffic from the Mall to clear that intersection. In other words, vehicles may end up waiting just up the block anyway so why not give the advantage to the pedestrian at the 5th Avenue NE and Mall driveway intersection.
- The Northgate area already has problems with pedestrians jaywalking across NE Northgate Way from Northgate North to the Mall. The existing partial pedestrian crossing at 3rd Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way is awkward and inconvenient and is indicative of the potential problems that could arise with an incomplete pedestrian link between sites.

SDOT Response: North approach crosswalk will be added to the plan.

- Curb Radius: The proposed 25'-30' curb radius at the 5th Avenue NE/"Civic Center" driveway is more consistent with a standard arterial-to-arterial-with heavy truck movement street improvement than with a driveway to arterial connection with an important pedestrian crosswalk. Our prior discussions about this issue have led us to understand that a larger radius narrows the length of the crosswalk and allows vehicles a broader and thus faster turn. We recommend that the curb radius be 15'. This would benefit the pedestrian by allowing for a longer crosswalk and a tighter and thus slower turn for vehicles exiting via the driveways. If longer wheel base vehicles need to access the driveways, they could be directed to access the driveways via a left turn from 5th Avenue NE to the driveway. In the alternative, longer wheel base vehicles (as they do all over the City) could wait for exiting vehicles from the driveway to clear and then use a part of the exit lane to complete a right turn into the driveway.

SDOT Response: All corner radii are being reduced by 5'. That is, the 25' and 30' radii will be reduced to 20' and 25' respectively.

- Bus Shelter: See the relocated bus stop on the west side of 5th Avenue south of the Mall driveway. We recommend that the City work with Simon Property Group and Metro to site this new bus shelter so that it does not obstruct the pedestrian pathway.

SDOT Response: Final bus shelter location has not been finalized. It is likely that the bus shelter will be on the back side of the sidewalk in line with the evergreen trees. If that is not possible, Metro policy is to locate the shelter facing toward the street within the street right-of-way.

Sheet 10: In order to increase pedestrian safety at the corner, we recommend that the proposed improvement to create a right-turn lane at the north side of the intersection be adjusted to provide for a 5' walkway and a 5' planting strip along the entire length of the walkway.

SDOT Response: No change to plan.

Sheet 11: We strongly support the addition of pedestrian scale lighting. We would appreciate having the opportunity to see and comment on the potential designs for the lighting fixtures.

SDOT Response: Pedestrian lighting will remain in the plan.

Sheet 12:

- Pedestrian Push Buttons: We observe with dismay that the signal plan calls for pedestrian push buttons for each and every pedestrian crossing movement at the 5th Avenue NE and Mall crossing. This implies that pedestrians are not expected to cross with any regularity at this location and that the priority is vehicular movement. If pedestrians do wish to cross, they will have to request and wait for crossing time for each crossing leg. We strongly recommend that the pedestrian push buttons be eliminated and that a pedestrian phase be included in the regular signal cycle.
- Signal Controller Box: We support the relocation of the signal controller box away from the southwest corner of the 5th Avenue NE and Mall driveway intersection.
- Mast Arms: We recommend that the design implement the intent shown in the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan Final Report (April 2002) for using mast arms rather than using span wires.

SDOT Response:

- *Pedestrian Push Buttons will be eliminated for the north-south movement.*
- *Signal Controller Box will be relocated to the NE corner of the intersection.*
- *Mast Arms will be added to the plan.*